

No Child Left Behind

Teacher Quality

Action Guide for Parents and Communities

PUBLIC
EDUCATION
NETWORK

Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

NCLB contains provisions designed to:

- discourage the hiring of teachers who lack expertise in their content areas which are defined as "core subject" areas, and
- to rectify the problem of large numbers of students being taught by teachers with inadequate content knowledge and preparation in the subjects they are teaching.

Requirements

The Law Requires:

- each state to develop a plan defining "highly qualified" teachers
- each state to adopt the teacher qualification stipulations as outlined in the law
- each Title I school district and Title I school to notify parents that they can request information about the qualifications of teachers in their school and their school district (see *Parents' Right to Know* Action Brief)
- Title I schools to notify parents if their child is being taught, for four consecutive weeks or more, by a teacher that does not meet the states "highly qualified" expectation

State and Local Teacher Quality Plans

Each state receiving Title I money (which is currently all of them) to develop a plan with action steps to ensure that all public elementary school and secondary school teachers in core academic subjects within the state are "highly-qualified" not later than the end of the 2005-2006 school year. These requirements do not apply to private school teachers. Core academic subjects are defined as: English, reading or language arts, history, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics, government, economics, arts, history and geography.

The state NCLB teacher quality plan must describe how:

- It will meet the "highly qualified" teacher requirement,
- It will define "highly qualified" teacher, and,
- It will develop and implement strategies for preparing, training, and recruiting teachers to meet the quality definition.

The state must also establish annual measurable goals for each school district and school to include:

1. Definition of a qualified teacher;
2. Annual increase in the percentage of highly qualified teachers in each school district and schools to meet the goal of highly qualified by the year 2005-2006;
3. Annual increase in the percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development aimed at making them highly qualified and successful teachers;
4. Develop any other measures required by the state to meet the teacher quality goal.
5. Develop strategies the state will use to monitor the progress of school districts and schools in meeting the goals;
6. Steps the SEA will take to ensure that Title I minority children and children from low income families are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers;
7. Other measures the state determines to be appropriate to increase teacher qualifications.

If states do not meet the 100 percent qualified teacher goal by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, they will not lose their federal funds if they are implementing the law and making a good faith effort to reach the highly qualified teacher goal in NCLB as soon as possible.

The US Department of Education will determine, on a state-by-state basis, whether or not a State is implementing the law and making a good-faith effort to reach the HQT goal by examining the following elements:

- The State's definition of a "high qualified teacher,"
- How the State reports to parents and the public classes taught by highly qualified teachers;
- The completeness and accuracy of HQT data reported to the Department,
- The steps the State has taken to ensure that experienced and qualified teachers are equitably distributed among classrooms with poor and minority children and those with their peers; and
- How successful the State's efforts are to recruit, retain, and improve the quality of teaching force

If in the judgment of ED, a state has made good faith effort to comply with the law based on the above criteria, it will have until the end of the 2006-2007 to comply with the NCLB deadlines.

If ED decides that a State has NOT made a good-faith effort to comply, the Department reserves the right to take appropriate action such as withholding federal funds.

Each school district must follow up with an implementation plan tailored to its local school community. *The act requires SEAs and LEAs to seek parent and community input when developing teacher quality action plans and requires schools to notify parents, upon parental request, of the qualifications of their children's teachers.* School districts that participate in Title I must also develop plan for meeting the federal teacher criteria by 2005–2006 which must include:

- Strategies the school district will use to implement the state plan;
- Include incentives for voluntary transfers, professional development, recruitment programs, or other effective means that minority students and students from low-income families are not taught at higher rates than other students by unqualified, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

Beginning in school year 2002-2003, both the states and school districts must annually report their progress in meeting their measurable goals publicly. School districts must also require their principals of Title I school to annually attest that their schools are in compliance with the teacher qualification requirements.

NCLB Definition of "Highly Qualified"

Effective the first day of the 2002-2003 school year, all teachers newly hired in programs funded by Title I must be highly qualified. The term "highly qualified", as defined in Title II, Part A, means that, at a minimum, teachers must:

- Possess a bachelor's degree,
- must be certified in the subjects and/or grades they teach,
- must be licensed to teach in the state,
- must demonstrate subject knowledge and teaching skills, and,
- must not be teaching with an emergency, temporary, or provisional license.

In final regulations released in March 2003, the US Department of Education specified that NCLB teacher requirements apply not just to newly hired teachers paid with Title I, Part A funds in targeted assistance programs, but also to newly hired teachers of core academic subjects in Title I schoolwide programs, and teachers employed by an LEA with Title I, Part A funds to provide services to eligible private school children.

NCLB Definition of "Highly Qualified" for:

- New Teachers in Elementary Schools
<http://www.nea.org/esea/eseateach.html#newe>
- New Teachers in Middle and High Schools
<http://www.nea.org/esea/eseateach.html#news>
- Current Teachers in Elementary, Middle and High Schools
<http://www.nea.org/esea/eseateach.html#exist>
- Charter Schools Teachers
<http://www.nea.org/esea/eseateach.html#exist>
- Alternatively Certified Teachers
<http://www.nea.org/esea/eseateach.html#exist>

Funding and Low Performing Schools

NCLB authorizes federal funding to increase the number of highly qualified teachers. Districts must use at least 5% of their Title I, Part A grant for professional development aimed at helping teachers become highly qualified. A school that has been identified as needing improvement must reserve 10% of its funds. Also, Title II of NCLB authorizes federal grants to states to train and recruit highly qualified teachers and principals (see Training, Preparing and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals, Title II; also requirements relate to low performing schools, and the NCLB transferability provisions)

Action Items

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Ask the SEA how the teacher quality plan and Title II application will be developed, who the community representatives are, and how they were selected.
- If the state has not yet completed its planning, ask to be part of the planning process as a CBO with expertise in teacher issues and public engagement.
- Widely disseminate the state plan to other CBOs and the community. Provide comments on the plan, and seek revisions and changes if necessary.
- Monitor the state planning process and hold state officials accountable for developing and implementing the plan.
- Find out about the LEA planning process, ask to participate on the LEA teacher quality planning committee, and provide information and feedback on the LEA plan.
- Develop statewide and school district coalitions to monitor implementation of the state's teacher quality plan and progress of the school district's teacher quality plan.
- Build statewide and community-based coalitions and partnerships to inform the public about the state plan. Create community and public support and demand for quality teachers and principals through an information campaign.
- Work with elected officials and state policymakers to ensure that state and federal resources are available for achieving teacher quality objectives.

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Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

On the state level

- Get involved with the state teacher quality planning committee.
- Get a copy of the SEA teacher quality plan. Join statewide coalitions to provide leadership, support, and wide dissemination of the plan.
- Voice comments and concerns about the plan to the SEA. If the plan is acceptable, build ownership for the plan among parents. Educate parents statewide about the content of the plan and progress toward implementation.
- Work with statewide and local community coalitions to hold school districts and the state accountable for implementation.
- Organize parents and community representatives in efforts to become informed about the need for more qualified teachers. Build public support and pressure state and federal governments to provide the resources needed to increase the number of qualified teachers.

On the district and local level

- Work with local community colleges and universities to develop partnerships with schools to recruit interns, student teachers and graduate students in the field of education.
- Find out how many teachers in your school are not highly qualified by requesting the information from the principal. Ask what is being done to help them become highly qualified.
- Find out about teacher turnover in your district and ask what is being done to retain good teachers.
- Find out what professional development opportunities are available to assist those who are not highly qualified and sustain those who are.
- Find out what support systems are in place, especially for new teachers. Advocate for coaching/mentoring of new staff.
- Join the school improvement council to provide support and resources.

Resources

- *AdultGegaSkills.org*
<http://www.adultmegaskills.org/>
- *Alliance for Excellent Education*
<http://www.all4ed.org>
- *American Federation of Teachers*
<http://www.aft.org>
- *Education Trust*
<http://www.edtrust.org>
- *MegaSkills® Online*
www.megaskillshsi.org/Default.htm
- *National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education*
<http://www.ncpie.org>
- *National Education Association*
<http://www.nea.org>
- *Parents for Public Schools; Parent Press*
<http://www.parents4publicschools.com/pics/newsletter.15.upload/2003.04PPSPress.pdf>
- *Public Education Network*
<http://www.PublicEducation.org>

Our Vision

Every day, in every community, *every* child
in America benefits from a quality public education.

Our Mission

To build public demand and mobilize resources for
quality public education for *all* children through a national
constituency of local education funds and individuals.



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